

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 065 072

HE 003 213

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TITLE The Instructional Process in Higher Education: A
Perspective.
PUB DATE [71]
NOTE 25p.
EDRS PRICE MF-\$0.65 HC-\$3.29
DESCRIPTORS Course Evaluation; *Curriculum Development;
*Curriculum Evaluation; Evaluation; *Higher
Education; *Program Evaluation; *Relevance
(Education)

ABSTRACT

A system of evaluation should be an essential part in the planning of each phase of curriculum development. The evaluation of the curriculum impact on the students can only be measured by comparing the students' status just before beginning the curriculum with their status at the conclusion of their studies. If little or no change in status is found, several possibilities may be considered. The college objectives may be unclear, inappropriate, or unachievable; student experiences may not be relevant to the objectives; the organization of the curricular experience may be inadequate; and/or the evaluation instruments may be invalid. (HS)

ED 065072

The Instructional Process
in Higher Education:
A Perspective

by

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Introduction

When one tries to assess the effectiveness of the instructional process in higher education he is confronted by many barriers.

First; what standards are used to evaluate teaching effectiveness? Second; who is responsible for devising such standards? Third; how can evaluators get access to a majority of college classrooms in order to make evaluations of effectiveness? Fourth; how are the evaluators chosen? Fifth; what measures can be taken to assure that faculties will accede to evaluation suggestions? Sixth; what provisions will be made for periodic re-evaluation? Seventh; what provisions will be made for periodic change in evaluation technique? Eighth; who will evaluate the evaluators? Ninth; what standards are to be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the evaluators?

And so, once we have completed the initial cyclical series of questions, we find ourselves confronted, once again, by essentially the same dilemma.

With a feeling of futility, I intent to approach the problem from a different perspective. Since teaching effectiveness is directly linked to the curricular structure of an institution, what can be done to "set the stage" for effective learning (vis a vis effective teaching) to take place in greater scale on the college campus; particularly on the liberal arts college campus?

What are the implications of the nature of undergraduate general education, course proliferation, factionalization of faculty components, multiplicity of institutional purpose, problems of self-evaluation, etc.? I would like to explore the aforementioned implications upon which I feel the effectiveness of college teaching is contingent.

Although student criticism during recent years has had a marked effect upon higher education, criticism from within higher education itself may be more devastating and indeed more telling in the last analysis.¹ There is also the feeling that some have finally become concerned about the unplanned mindless explosion of growth which may very well serve to destroy the institutions and also that these critics within higher education have shown that colleges fail because neither curricula nor style of teaching had much effect on the lives of students.²

There is also the feeling that colleges should be adaptive to changes which are self-generating; they must be adaptive to their surroundings and their times, and that because of the pressures upon the colleges to serve both history and the present we have tried to produce "educated" people by "inflicting" a well-rounded, general education curriculum on the undergraduates.³

It seems that general education, itself, was a response to four problems created by institutions of higher learning, suggests Stanley Idzerda.⁴ The first is the "intellectual smorgasbord" of the free elective system which gives no assurance to educational balance since (second) vocational offerings are just about as common on small liberal arts college campuses as elsewhere. Thirdly, there exists the assumption that each student is being prepared to pursue a specialty in graduate school and must

¹Mayhew, "And Now The Future," p. 310.

²Ibid.

³Loeb, "How Can the Undergraduate College Introduce Innovations and Effect New Developments which Reflect Present and Future Responsibilities Without Destroying Institutional Balance," p. 65.

⁴Idzerda, "Academic Rigor," p. 105.

be narrowed into a specialized major field. Finally, the social composition of the campus is being changed by the comprehensive urban public high school which is sending enormous numbers of students on to college. As a result of these responses, courses were lumped together under the heading of general education, survey courses were instituted which gave students a "smattering" of knowledge in several dissociated fields, perhaps a result was not a broader curriculum but a "flabbier" one.⁵

A justification of the tendency for college course proliferation, observe Brown and Mayhew, is that the secondary schools discovered general education and began offering courses similar to those once offered on the college level.⁶ Consequently, the undergraduate curriculum is becoming increasingly confused and, while a reduction in course offerings is being sought by many theorists, many prestigious institutions, while rendering it somewhat impotent by emphasizing the election of courses and variety in course content.⁷ Rees, by the same token, feels that extensive high school preparation provides colleges with the opportunity of erasing the courses that do not take advantage of the students' preparation.⁸

In an attempt to stress educational rigor, the standard curriculum-course has been made difficult, to be sure, but this emphasis has not been carefully thought out. All too often it is a mindless reaction to public or official criticism.⁹ This notion is stressed by Dressel and DeLisle since they are of

⁵Ibid., pp. 106-108.

⁶Brown and Mayhew, American Higher Education, p. 51.

⁷Ibid., pp. 51-52.

⁸Rees, "How Can the Undergraduate College Best Meet Curricular Pressures from Graduate and Professional Schools and from New Developments in Secondary Education," p. 71.

⁹Idzerda, "Academic Rigor," pp. 109-110.

the opinion that most educational ideas are not new except for a particular institution in the process of adopting a change.¹⁰ Much of what is termed as innovation is merely the careless adoption of a fad and should more aptly be termed renovation. Consequently, innovation, in the true sense of the word, can come about only when ideas, practices, and programs are organized, in new and creative manners, into some sort of coherent "whole" which facilitates student learning.¹¹ This sort of fundamental change is rare.¹²

Logan Wilson feels that many of our institutions are trying to do too many things.¹³ Even in the single purpose liberal arts college there are often no applied criteria for judging teaching performance. The curriculum is, in almost all cases, a product of historic accretion rather than a product of contemporary design. New courses are added carelessly and virtually nothing is discarded.¹⁴

Current developments such as an increase in departmental size and in the number of courses offered should point up the decline of pure liberal education. These increases make it difficult to achieve any unity or even significant sharing of educational experiences in the undergraduate curriculum. If general degree requirements become extensive, requests to waiver some of these requirements are soon made by certain departments. When this

¹⁰Dressel and DeLisle, "Undergraduate Curriculum Trends," p. 2.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Wilson, "Form and Function in American Higher Education," p. 31.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 31-32.

happens there begins to be a tendency to set up common, but a more limited set of requirements for all curricula.¹⁵ There should be a general rule in this regard that states that no department in a liberal arts college can afford to offer approximately one and one-half times the number of courses actually required for a major. This allows ample breadth for student individual differences yet keeps the number of courses within manageable proportions.¹⁶

One way of breaking down departmentalization in order to provide a somewhat broader general education or interdisciplinary course, states Paul Dressel, is to introduce the divisional organization to the liberal arts college.¹⁷ At most colleges, the student is required to take specific courses; and he is required to complete a major. Also, the department, as the primary unit in the college, has tended to detach the faculty from advising students on matters other than selection of courses in their own department.¹⁸

DeVane suggests that with careful planning, the curriculum could be made broader and, at the same time, more useful in itself or as a base for advanced work than it now is.¹⁹ When such a functional and rational curriculum is designed with flexibility and concern for the wide range of abilities, the proper choice of its component courses will be an easy matter. Such a

¹⁶Mayhew, The Smaller Liberal Arts College, pp. 52-53.

¹⁷Dressel, The Undergraduate Curriculum in Higher Education, pp. 44-45.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 63.

¹⁹DeVane, "The College of Liberal Arts," p. 10.

curriculum will find acceptance only if a willingness is shown by vested interest groups to yield some of their departmental sovereignty.²⁰

Rothwell states further that one of the most debilitating forces with respect to sound liberal education is the extent to which some institutions have permitted the liberal arts curriculum to become obscured in "jungle-like" course multiplication and diluted by course profusion that serves the ends of special interest groups without regard to the qualities of inter-relationship and wholeness that are essential to a sound liberal learning program.²¹

Course proliferation can assume many forms. The types that are frequently noted reflect either slight variations in course content to satisfy the whims of other departments, slight variations in prerequisites of several courses in the same department to accommodate students with differing backgrounds, duplicating and overlapping courses in different departments, courses which are unduly narrow and specialized at the undergraduate level, and courses which are unduly elementary or entirely inappropriate for the college level.²²

Clarence H. Faust feels that when one turns to the liberal arts curriculum when considering the dynamic changes continually taking place within the American community, he is very often disappointed to find that the structure of the curriculum reflects the history of the departmental disciplines and the organization of the graduate schools as of several generations.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Rothwell, "The Reaffirmation of Liberal Education," p. 45.

²²Dressel, "The Undergraduate Curriculum in Higher Education," pp. 61-62.

ago. It seems that it is assumed that all things that are known can be made to fit neatly within departmental compartments. The organization of the curriculum, its courses, and the subject area dealt with by these courses are not determined by the urgent realities of the world but rather by the internal evolution of the academic disciplines themselves.²³

Dressel and DeLisle go on to state more specifically that institutional change as a result of faculty interests, publicity, institutional and departmental prestige, opportunism, and response to external or internal pressures has specifically come about much more frequently than change due to qualitative deliberation based upon educational goals, social needs, and the abilities and goals of students.²⁴

Lewis Mayhew, along these lines, is of the opinion that the liberal arts curriculum is an extraordinarily effective demonstration of cultural lag. Practitioners of academic subjects struggle for years to make their subject areas respectable enough for inclusion within the college curriculum. Once this is achieved these subjects continue even though the reasons for their existence have long disappeared.²⁵ When one analyzes existing course offerings of a liberal arts curriculum, it is discovered that there are clearly defined parts of the curriculum which should be eradicated for the good of the entire organism.²⁶

²³Faust, "Specialization and Liberal Arts," p. 48.

²⁴Dressel and DeLisle, Undergraduate Curriculum Trends, p. 2

²⁵Mayhew, The Smaller Liberal Arts College, p. 43.

²⁶Ibid., p. 53.

An interesting point is raised by Dressel as he observes that the quality of any undergraduate program depends, along with the courses and curriculum requirements, on the instruction and advising function of the faculty. Rigidly defined curricula deprive the student and his advisors of the opportunity of seeing an individual program take form as a result of thinking through the significance of the entire undergraduate program.²⁷

As a solution, states Kirk, the liberal arts college should reduce the elective feature of the curriculum to a minimum since the undergraduate is not ordinarily yet capable of judging with discretion what his course of studies ought to be.²⁸ Service and remedial courses, adds Michael, should not be a part of the college curriculum. Too many colleges offer coursework that is repetitive.²⁹

Jacques Barzun, along the same line, feels that in some ways too much goes on in our universities while at the same time, not enough. Most universities offer too many courses at an insufficient density of instruction. He urges sobriety in the curriculum in terms of abandoning the notion of "coverage" being the goal of the college department.³⁰ Kirk reinforces this notion when he remarks that the liberal arts college should turn away from "survey courses," "general education," and similar substitutes for real intellectual discipline.³¹

²⁷Dressel, The Undergraduate Curriculum in Higher Education, pp. 70-71.

²⁸Kirk, "American Colleges: A Proposal for Reform," p. 112.

²⁹Michael, "How Can the Undergraduate College Best Meet Curricular Pressures from Graduate and Professional Schools and from New Developments in Secondary Education," p. 75.

³⁰Jacques Barzun, The American University, p. 249.

³¹Kirk, "American Colleges: A Proposal for Reform," p. 111.

Dressel states further that as long as the number of vocational and subvocational fields increases there will be a continuation of course and curriculum proliferation. This can result from departmental competition and may result in insufficient attention and emphasis on instruction and academic advising.³²

It should be noted that any effort to add new dimensions to liberal learning must be done at the same time that the college is being asked to cope with great increases in knowledge in all fields.³³ Vested interest groups or individuals in the course-credit structure may serve to destroy the attempts of curricular reorganization.³⁴

John Corson is of the opinion that the characteristics of the dispersion of decision-making authority, the autonomy of departments, freedom from hierarchical direction, and commitment of scholars to their disciplines, constitute a set of antibodies which actually serve to guard an academic program and faculty against educational evolution to such an extent as to discourage the creative adaptation to a changing society.³⁵

The curriculum, notes Axelrod, also serves as a sensitive instrument which reflects the nature of the faculty community.³⁶

³²Dressel, The Undergraduate Curriculum in Higher Education, pp. 55-56.

³³Mayhew, Higher Education in the Revolutionary Decades, p. 392.

³⁴Dressel, "A Look at New Curriculum Models for Undergraduate Education," p. 143.

³⁵Corson, The Governance of Colleges and Universities, p. 174.

³⁶Axelrod, "The Undergraduate Curriculum and Institutional Goals: An Exploration of Means and Ends," p. 128.

On this subject, Mary Woods Bennett is of the opinion that today's college president must find and retain a faculty which can keep a college "in the running" with curricula intelligently conceived and effectively taught. He must encourage both administrative officers and faculty to give continuous attention to long-range planning. The one course that the college may not take if it is to survive is to leave to chance its own pattern for change.³⁷ Faculty and administration must discuss and evaluate the curriculum honestly, with a minimum of logrolling, and determine its effectiveness in meeting agreed upon goals.³⁸

Corson explains, on these points, that the very characteristics which may tend to discourage qualitative change on the one hand, may actually contribute to change under the proper direction.³⁹

New ideas, insights and other stimuli from an ever-changing society, when the proper people are mobilized to further them, can contribute to a dynamic and creative educational program. Educational progress will result when these collegiate leaders begin to weigh ideas, insights, and suggestions for creative change in an open-minded effort to assimilate those which have permanent value in the educational program and to reject those which are of only transitory significance.⁴⁰

³⁷Bennett, "Changes Within the Liberal Arts Colleges," p. 65.

³⁸Rees, "How Can the Undergraduate College Best Meet Curricular Pressures from Graduate and Professional Schools and from New Developments in Secondary Education," p. 72.

³⁹Corson, The Governance of Colleges and Universities, p. 174.

⁴⁰Ibid.

As for innovation, the academic world is as loath to change its familiar ways as any other occupation,⁴¹ and as important as the curricular form is, if the content remains static then hope is lost.⁴²

While Kirk states that our times seem to require changes that are reactionary as opposed to innovating,⁴³ Dressel and DeLisle accordingly add that by the time certain changes are initiated at a certain institution, the same changes have been abandoned, modified or made unrecognizable at others.⁴⁴

Some developments also seem to appear and disappear on almost a cyclical basis. At any one given time, the philosophies and curricular practices from one end of the undergraduate collegiate spectrum to the other can be found in a comprehensive summation of American education.⁴⁵

Kirk, on the matter of change, observes that since the continuity of any institution can be conserved with prudent change, the question is whether this sort of change should be "forward" in a bold direction, or "backward" to a restoration of neglected old essentials.⁴⁶

But as shown by Dressel's and DeLisle's research,⁴⁷ changes made by colleges may vary in many ways. Frequently, innovations are manifested by

⁴¹Nason, "American Higher Education in 1980: Some Basic Issues," p. 407.

⁴²Axelrod, "The Undergraduate Curriculum and Institutional Goals: An Exploration of Means and Ends," p. 128.

⁴³Kirk, "American Colleges: A Proposal for Reform," p. 103.

⁴⁴Dressel and DeLisle, Undergraduate Curriculum Trends, p. 2.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Kirk, "American Colleges: A Proposal for Reform," p. 103.

⁴⁷Dressel and DeLisle, Undergraduate Curriculum Trends, p. 5.

merely using new devices, new procedures, or the modifications of existing plans to apply to more students. Such changes usually do not reflect any basic change in institutional philosophy, objective or assumption. Consequently, the actual educational experience for a majority of students may not be altered significantly.⁴⁸

A possible answer to the problem is that there should be a definition of basic curriculum concepts made when developing a new program;⁴⁹ more attention should be given to the abler and ambitious student by way of advanced placement to avoid boredom and loss of intellectual momentum;⁵⁰ short-lived courses and duplicative materials should be eliminated by organizing essential knowledge into fewer and larger blocks;^{51,52} the curriculum should be freed from the artificial frameworks such as the fifty-minute hour, the Monday-Wednesday week, the September-June year, lower, upper, and graduate divisions, and especially the course-credit structure.^{53,54}

Within the last few years, colleges and universities have been trying to find out more about themselves.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Dressel, "A Look at New Curriculum Models for Undergraduate Education," p. 145.

⁵⁰Michael, "How Can the Undergraduate College Best Meet Curricular Pressures from Graduate and Professional Schools and from New Developments in Secondary Education," pp. 75-76.

⁵¹Dressel, "A Look at New Curriculum Models for Undergraduate Education," p. 144.

⁵²Paul Dressel and Margaret Lorimer, "Report on Visit to Nasson College," (unpublished mimeograph report, January 7-9, 1969), p. 5.

⁵³Axelrod, "The Undergraduate Curriculum and Institutional Goals: An Exploration of Means and Ends," p. 127.

⁵⁴Dressel, "A Look at New Curriculum Models for Undergraduate Education," p. 143.

Colleges, once immune to self-study are being forced because of mounting public skepticisms as to institutional honesty and the true depth of college effectiveness, are now creating offices and centers of institutional research to audit both internal and intramural educational efforts. These activities imply a hope that through more precise knowledge can come better decisions and greater public understanding, and overall improvement of the college education.⁵⁵

William P. Fidler, on the same subject, states that several learned societies have established active education committees which are obtaining the cooperation of related groups in spawning new curricula, developing new ways of training, and in establishing summer institutes for the refurbishing of college teachers.⁵⁶ In spite of these efforts, there are fields in which little attention is being given to changing curricular needs and related matters.⁵⁷

James Doi is of the opinion that colleges and universities do not possess valid measures of educational, instructional, research, and scholarly productivity. The choice that remains is between permitting ourselves to be evaluated and governed by confusion, or launching a concerted effort to obtain such measures in order to find rationality.⁵⁸

DeVane suggests that another cause of current problems may be attributed to the fact that most excellent and poor colleges have the common characteristic that neither has often been willing to engage in bold educational

⁵⁵Mayhew, "And Now the Future," pp. 317-318.

⁵⁶Fidler, "Problems of the Professional Associations and Learned Societies," p. 252.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Doi, "Measuring University Productivity," pp. 218-219

experiments whether because of inherent conservatism, sheer complacency, lack of imaginative leadership, or lack of material resources.⁵⁹

Such blind conservatism, as Bruce Deering explains, is an obstacle to the maintenance of academic excellence. Student bodies as well as faculties are resistant to change and innovation. This is distressing in that colleges which should be taking the lead in innovating are lagging far behind the military and industry in this regard. Efficiency should not be feared but should be utilized, it is felt, to lead to better teaching with less effort for more people.⁶⁰

In this regard Corson suggests that faculty members dealing with the professions or the liberal arts tend to suspect change that is put forth by groups that are external to either the institution or to their discipline or profession.⁶¹ Changes in courses or curricula to account for developments within society are often viewed by faculties as a sacrifice of traditional values until such changes are adopted by prestige institutions. These faculties, since they concentrate primarily upon their own subject areas, rarely concern themselves with educational problems of a broader perspective.⁶² This practice often gives rise to institutional or course irrelevance.

These factors, in combination, tend to affect the significance of the undergraduate liberal arts education with respect to the individual student. The importance of this result is emphasized by Nason as he states that

⁵⁹DeVane, "The College of Liberal Arts," p. 5.

⁶⁰Deering, "Abuses in Undergraduate Teaching," p. 223.

⁶¹Corson, The Governance of Colleges and Universities, p. 173.

⁶²Ibid., p. 174.

undergraduate education which is liberal and significant must speak to the conditions which are of the most concern to the students.⁶³

The knowledge explosion has also played a major role in the evolution of current programs as also have been the societal needs of the United States, the ecological pressures on the environment, student demand, and the demand for increased technological competencies.⁶⁴ As a result of these pressures, courses and curricula must constantly undergo scrutiny toward their updating to guard against their becoming obsolete. The resulting dilemma is in the assigning of the interrelation of and the priorities according to the various phases of college and university functions.⁶⁵

As a result of the vast knowledge explosion, DeVane also feels that it is the primary task for all liberal arts colleges to rethink and reconstruct the curriculum. He states that the danger in the older, mainly verbal education is a loss of vitality and relevance which may lead to stagnation. The danger in new developments, mainly mathematical and scientific, may be in the possibility of overwhelming the old and creating a new imbalance.⁶⁶ He sees that the conventional form of education at the college level must be renovated and enlarged if the whole concept is to be saved. A balanced curriculum, fair to both old and new, must be designed which must include the older liberating studies along with the necessary bases of academic thought.⁶⁷

⁶³Nason, "American Higher Education in 1980: Some Basic Issues," p. 405.

⁶⁴Dressel and DeLisle, Undergraduate Curriculum Trends, p. 5.

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶DeVane, "The College of Liberal Arts," p. 9.

⁶⁷Ibid.

In order to solve the problem of balance within the curriculum, Dressel made an early attempt to develop a statement of principles that govern the development of undergraduate curriculums. These principles are aimed at minimizing the distinction between liberal and vocational programs; by restricting the range of courses offered; by encouraging more qualitative student and faculty planning and advising; and by suggesting budgetary and administrative procedures which will reinforce the curricular principles.⁶⁸

At a relatively much later date Lewis Mayhew somewhat paraphrases Dressel when he comments that in order to realize the proper balance between breadth and depth of curriculum, the college or university may find it advisable to modify its present courses in government, literature, or art, to be presented in a comparative manner. He states further that in order to bring about a new strategy for liberal learning we must recognize that area knowledge, language competence, and a sophisticated sense of how the world works will be required.⁶⁹

A somewhat earlier statement from an administrative perspective was put forth by John Corson when he noted that the administrator's task of ensuring balanced curricular offerings is often thwarted because of the personal research interest of professors. Such interests usually result in the inclusion of a course in the department's offerings. A collection of these courses may not serve the students' best interests in terms of providing them with a greater grasp of the world's knowledge.⁷⁰

⁶⁸Dressel, The Undergraduate Curriculum in Higher Education, pp. 90-91.

⁶⁹Mayhew, Higher Education in the Revolutionary Decades, pp. 393-394.

⁷⁰Corson, The Governance of Colleges and Universities, p. 150.

Hayhaw is of the opinion that the undergraduate college need not concern itself unduly with the prerequisites for graduate education⁷¹ while in the same regard Michael feels that the college should understand and evaluate the curriculum pressures it is exerting upon the secondary school.⁷²

DeVane is also aware of these pressures as he notes that he sees colleges as being pressured from below by the improved instruction on the high school level because of advanced credit courses, and from above by the strong trend toward early specialization that is being demanded by the graduate and professional schools.⁷³ As a result, Michael suggest that secondary schools should withstand efforts of colleges to increase course specialization. They should also oppose trends to employ hidden entrance requirements.⁷⁴

Michael observes that better school-college articulation is needed because many college faculties know little about experimentation and changes that are found in the secondary school.⁷⁵

To use an example of what is possible within distinct academic disciplines, Mina Rees has described efforts, by the entire mathematics community, to establish curricular goals for primary through graduate school, to improve the overall instructional effectiveness of mathematics programs.⁷⁶

⁷¹Corson, The Governance of Colleges and Universities, p. 150.

⁷²Michael, "How Can the Undergraduate College Best Meet Curricular Pressures from Graduate and Professional Schools and from New Developments in Secondary Education," p. 75.

⁷³DeVane, "The College of Liberal Arts," p. 12.

⁷⁴Michael, "How Can the Undergraduate College Best Meet Curricular Pressures from Graduate and Professional Schools and from New Developments in Secondary Education," p. 75.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 74.

⁷⁶Rees, "Efforts of the Mathematical Community to Improve the Mathematics Curriculum," pp. 228-233.

Mary Woods Bennett contends that we must consider the means, the organizational devices, by which institutions take stock, make policy, develop and carry out procedures for the attainment of their corporate purposes and for dealing with the pressures of our times.⁷⁷ For the liberal arts college, the capacity to effect drastic change may well be the key to survival when such changes are required to keep an institution both educationally stimulating and financially solvent. Traditional departmental organization, with departmental loyalties strengthened by ever-increasing specialization, may negate the opportunity for a unitary approach to policy and decision making by the faculty as a whole.⁷⁸

Paul Heist agrees that the future needs for research in higher education appear tremendous in comparison to that which has been accomplished.⁷⁹ It is appalling to note, he adds, how little has been done by individual colleges. Only a few have attempted to evaluate the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of students relative to the objectives of the particular institutions. The presumed goals of education are all too often overlooked in the evaluative scheme and in research designs.⁸⁰

Heist goes on to suggest that colleges and universities should initiate research programs on a continuative basis with a recurrent self-evaluation

⁷⁷Bennett, "Changes Within the Liberal Arts Colleges," pp. 63-64.

⁷⁸Ibid., pp. 64-65.

⁷⁹Heist, "Research in Higher Education: Current Status and Future Needs," p. 155.

⁸⁰Ibid.

incorporated within their systems,⁸¹ and Michael adds that the college should define its role and develop a program consistent with its mission.⁸²

An extremely significant point is made by Dressel as he states that when curricular changes are anticipated, each should be reexamined in the light of the total program philosophy and rationale, for any change usually provokes a flood of additional requests for change.⁸³

Some assumptions arise out of an analysis of problems of the undergraduate curriculum.⁸⁴ Dressel feels that the role of undergraduate higher education requires clarification of objectives, subject matter sequences, and specificity of preparation; curriculums should be built with a flexibility which will permit reasonable changes in career plans during, as well as, following the college years; all courses and curriculums offered in a college should be based on a body of knowledge, concepts, and principles selected from the basic disciplines of the arts and sciences; the offerings, instructional practices and plans of any one department or college must be subject to review by the others; the responsibility for definition and approval of undergraduate curriculums and courses rests with the entire institution; administrative officers should exercise strong leadership in policy development and interpretation; the institution itself must finally be the judge of

⁸¹Ibid., p. 156.

⁸²Michael, "How Can the Undergraduate College Best Meet Curricular Pressures from Graduate and Professional Schools and from New Developments in Secondary Education," p. 76.

⁸³Dressel, "A Look at New Curriculum Models for Undergraduate Education," p. 145.

⁸⁴Dressel, The Undergraduate Curriculum in Higher Education, p. 72.

the appropriateness of any program to its purposes and resources; courses should be grouped into larger blocks of subject matter and there should be an associated decrease in scheduled class hours.⁸⁵

Kroepsch and Kaplan accordingly feel that improvement of current operations and the making of plans for the future require that colleges know more about themselves and about their educational objectives; about the characteristics of their faculties and student bodies, and the extent to which their programs do or do not achieve stated goals. Curricula of colleges has very often failed to keep abreast of research advances. Traditional organizational structures also tend to hinder the development of programs requiring interdisciplinary and interdepartmental perspectives and collaboration.⁸⁶

A system of evaluation should be an essential part in the planning of each phase of curriculum development. The evaluation of the curriculum impact upon the students can only be measured by comparing the students' status just before beginning the curriculum with their status at the conclusion of their studies. If little or no change in status is found, several possibilities may be considered. The college objectives may be unclear, inappropriate, or unachievable; student experiences may not be relevant to the objectives; the organization of the curricular experience may be inadequate; and/or the evaluation instruments may be invalid.⁸⁷

⁸⁵Ibid., pp. 72-74.

⁸⁶Kroepsch and Kaplan, "Interstate Cooperation and Coordination in Higher Education," pp. 185-187.

⁸⁷Dressel, The Undergraduate Curriculum in Higher Education, pp. 19-35.

Logan Wilson sums up the points by suggesting that colleges and universities cannot remain static within a complex and growing society. They have the obligation of providing better education to larger numbers of people, thus, they must be viable and must not ignore current problems and issues without losing their social significance. But he feels that there is futility in endeavoring to be all things to all men, for multi-universities, like small colleges, can be overextended too, which makes it essential that priorities of effort be established among and within institutions of higher education.⁸⁸

⁸⁸Wilson, "Establishing Priorities," pp. 227-230.

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